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SUBJECT: CANADA: MPs PASS CENSURE MOTION ON IRAN

REF: OTTAWA 820

OTTAWA 00000822 001.2 OF 002

**¶11. (U)** Summary: Canada's House of Commons has unanimously passed a strongly-worded, non-binding motion supporting the democratic aspirations and human rights of the people of Iran, condemning Iran's disregard of UN Security Council Resolutions 1696, 1737, 1747 and 1803 and International Atomic Energy Agency requirements, and advising that Canada recommend to international organizations of which it is a member that a new set of targeted sanctions be implemented against Iran, in concert with allies, unless Iran complies with its human rights and nuclear obligations in law and in practice. Foreign Minister Lawrence Cannon confirmed separately that Canada will again table in the United Nations General Assembly a resolution on the Situation of Human Rights in Iran (reftel). The International Human Rights Sub-Committee of the House of Commons' Foreign Affairs Committee is also currently wrapping up a lengthy study of the human rights situation in Iran. The Commons has now unanimously passed two resolutions in seven months condemning human rights practices in Iran, sending a strong signal of concern over ongoing violations. End summary

STRONGLY-WORDED MOTION

**¶12. (U)** On October 27, the House of Commons unanimously passed a strongly-worded, non-binding motion censuring Iranian authorities for their violation of the democratic and human rights of the Iranian people and their non-compliance with Iran's nuclear obligations under international law. The Chair of the International Human Rights Sub-committee of the Foreign Affairs Committee moved the motion after prior private consultation with representatives of all four parties in the Commons, including the ruling Conservatives. After passage, the motion becomes a resolution of the House with no legal effect, but stands as an expression of the opinion of elected members and forms part of the official record of the House.

**¶13. (U)** The text of the parliamentary motion follows:

"By unanimous consent it was resolved, - That, in the opinion of the House: (a) Canada supports the democratic aspirations of the people of Iran; (b) Canada condemns the use of violence and force by Iranian authorities against their own people to suppress pro-democracy demonstrations following the Iranian presidential elections of June 12, 2009; (c) Canada condemns the use of torture by Iranian authorities; (d) Canada calls for the immediate release of all political prisoners held in Iran; (e) Canada calls on Iran to fully respect all of its human rights obligations, both in law and in practice; (f) Canada condemns Iran's complete disregard for legally binding United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1696,

1737, 1747 and 1803 and International Atomic Energy Agency requirements; (g) Canada affirms its opposition to nuclear proliferation and condemns any pursuit by Iran of nuclear weapons capability; and (h) Canada recommends to international organizations of which it is a member that a new set of targeted sanctions be implemented against Iran, in concert with allies, unless Iran comes into compliance with its human rights and nuclear obligations in law and in practice."

CANADA TO TABLE MOTION ON IRAN FOR SIXTH SUCCESSIVE YEAR

¶4. (U) Approval of the motion immediately followed the daily Question Period in the Commons, during which Foreign Minister Lawrence Cannon confirmed that, for the sixth successive year, "Canada will table a strong resolution at the United Nations General Assembly that will continue to take Iran to task for its appalling behavior in international affairs and the blatant disregard the regime carries out on its own citizens. Under this government, we will stand up for human rights with everybody who is supporting us."

HR SUB-COMMITTEE COMPLETES IRAN STUDY

OTTAWA 00000822 002.2 OF 002

¶5. (U) Separately, the House of Commons' Sub-Committee on International Human Rights is wrapping up a lengthy study of the human rights situation in Iran. The Sub-Committee began its study in March. Committees and Sub-Committees have the power to study any issue proposed by their members that falls within their mandate, do not need government clearance of their topics, and may draw up their own witness lists. Witnesses included representatives of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Genocide Watch, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, B'nai Brith Canada, the Iran Human Rights Documentation Center, the Abdorrahman Boroumand Foundation, the Transatlantic Institute, the Canadian Centre for International Justice, the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Human Rights Activists in Iran, Association for Defence of Azerbaijani Political Prisoners in Iran, Baha'i Community of Canada, and, as individuals, Sharif Behruz (Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan), Professor Alan Dershowitz (Harvard Law School), and Stephan Kazemi (the son of Canadian-Iranian photojournalist Zahra Kazemi, who died in 2003 of injuries sustained while in custody in Iran). Testimony has focused on the better use of effective, targeted sanctions and Iran's violation of human rights and minority rights, as well as Iranian authorities' incitement to genocide, support for international terrorism, and efforts to acquire nuclear weapons.

¶6. (SBU) Sub-Committee Chair and Conservative MP Scott Reid told poloffs that the Sub-Committee expects to finish its hearings by early to mid-November, and has begun to draft what he thought would be a useful report. Despite the inherent partisanship of a minority parliament, Reid noted that the dynamic on the Sub-Committee was productive, and that he strove as Chair to guide members toward study topics on which there was likely to be a degree of consensus that would produce stronger reports and that would have a real impact. However, he admitted that the two Bloc Qu????b????cois members of the Sub-Committee were "uncomfortable" with the draft report's wording related to genocide and could "hold out" against the majority on the Sub-Committee. He further acknowledged that the Sub-Committee's parent committee -- the Foreign Affairs Committee -- may similarly find elements of the report contentious. The Sub-Committee's report must first be approved by the Foreign Affairs Committee before submission to the full House of Commons. Reid acknowledged that "most" of the Sub-Committee's work never leaves the Foreign Affairs Committee, and declined to estimate when, or if, the present report would be

released.

¶7. (SBU) The primary driver behind the present study is Liberal MP Irwin Cotler, past president of the Canadian Jewish Congress, former Liberal Minister of Justice, and a former professor of international human rights at McGill University in Montreal, Quebec. Cotler is also ex officio member of the Canadian Parliamentary Coalition to Combat Antisemitism (CPCCA). The CPCCA will host the second international Inter-parliamentary Committee for Combating Antisemitism in 2010 (Scott Reid is co-Chair.)

¶8. (U) The Sub-Committee previously studied the Baha'i community in Iran. The Sub-Committee reported its study on that issue to the House of Commons in February. On March 30, the House of Commons unanimously adopted a strongly-worded motion forwarded by the Sub-Committee condemning the "ongoing persecution" of the Baha'i community in Iran and calling for the reconsideration of charges against, and the release of, Baha'i members of the Friends of Iran arrested in 2008, or that they be brought to trial without delay, and that the trial be open, fair and conducted in the presence of international observers.

JACOBSON